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Underwater trench to double Great Salt Lake's brines production

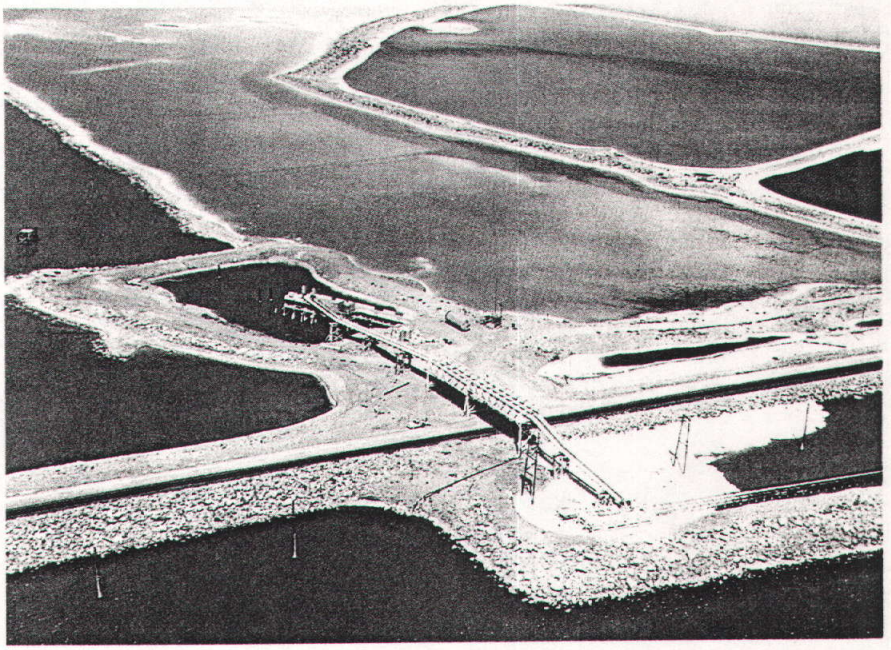
Great Salt Lake Minerals Corp. (GSL), opened of a 34-km (21-mile), underwater, brine transporting trench that will enable the company to almost double its current sulfate of potash (SOP) output.

The Behrens Trench will connect GSL's original 77 km^2 (19,000-acre) pond system to an additional 71 km^2 (17,500-acres) of solar ponds on the opposite side of the Great Salt Lake. This will let concentrated brines flow from the new system to the old and eventually allow the GSL to increase its SOP output to 381 kt/a (420,000 stpy) without additional transportation costs.

Great Salt Lake Minerals is a subsidiary of the Harris Chemical Group. Inc. It is also the largest North American producer of sulfate of potash.

According to Robert F. Clark, president of GSL, the west side of the north arm of the Great Salt Lake sees less than half of the average rainfall the east side gets. This greatly increases the concentration of minerals in the brine. "Our challenge was to find an economical and ecological way to transport that brine to our current processing plant," he said. This trench allows the company to avoid any trucking or pipeline costs.

Clark also explained that the brine flows from the western pond, under the lake, to an existing pump station at the eastern processing facility. There, the brine is concentrated and the precipitated minerals are separated into SOP, salt, magnesium chloride and sodium sulfate.



Brines that travel along the (21-mile) Behrens Trench end up at a pumping facility (shown) that transports the brines into a 77-km^2 (19,000-acre) pond system. In the ponds, the brine is concentrated and the precipitated minerals are separated into sulfate of potash, salt, magnesium chloride and sodium sulfate.

GSL reported total revenue of about $71.2 million in the fiscal year ending March 1993. This was due primarily to its production of SOP. SOP is used in specialized fertilizers for fruits, vegetables, tobacco and turf grass. SOP applications rely on low salt and chloride content, which characterizes the SOP extracted from the Great Salt Lake.

The company is one of three principal subsidiaries of Harris Chemical Group. The other subsidiaries include North American Salt Co. and North American Chemical Co.

North American Salt is the result of three separate acquisitions in the United States and Canada over a two-year period (American Salt Co., Carey Salt, Inc. and the Sifto Salt Division of Domtar Inc.). North American Salt and its two principal subsidiaries, Sifto Canada Inc. and Carey Salt Company, have five evaporator plants and two large rock salt mines.

In addition, North American Salt has an agreement with GSL to market GSL's solar salt output. North American Salt markets its salt products to applications that include food processing, water softening, agricultural feed, highway deicing and chemical uses.

North American Chemical Co. is a major producer of soda ash and boron chemical products. The company's production facilities are located in Searles Valley, CA, and produce soda ash for the domestic market and for export. ♦